

WSP LFC COVID-19 Teleconference Notes

Date 5/11/2020 Time 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Attendees

Department/Facility Co-Chair: Steve Barker

LFC Co-Chair: Anna Ivanov

Secretary LFC: Susan Wade, taking notes

Present: Danita Parkins, Wendy Dubinsky, Dean Dubinsky, Rob Jackson, Bill Copland, Carrie Meyer, Caitlin Robertson, Joanna Carns, Paige Perkinson

The following questions were addressed:

- **Please provide the most up to date stats on what's below and tell us more about one staff member testing positive and how it affected the prison operations?**

- # of men in quarantine - 13
- # of men in isolation - 14
- # of men tested including results – 85 tested, no positives result, 5 test results pending
- # of staff currently screened out – 33
- # of staff tested positive – 2 medical staff

The inmate in IMU that tested positive at St. Mary's, when he went out for surgery, was tested at WSP facility and it was negative, staff is not sure if it was a false positive or false negative, therefore a third test may need to be used for clarification on status.

- **Are there any changes in the facility now that there is a positive case amongst the incarcerated?**

No, he is still in isolation, as noted tested again, and staff involved are out.

- **What is the status on PPE for staff and the incarcerated individuals?**

There are no changes to the protocol of PPE. Staff is changing out PPE at a good rate. Staff received a new shipment of the handkerchief style masks and upon arrival ordered another 400. Some masks have shrunk, or not reusable, in that case a new mask is given out upon request. If anyone arrives without one, we then have additional on hand for distribution. WSP staff are aware that there is access to additional and can distribute as needed. The in-house SPL made masks are being given to the CI and kitchen workers in the East and West complexes. These masks are easier to work in and wear. Some incarcerated individuals were recently found wearing inappropriate "colored masks" with STG related drawings, and those were replaced with the state issued masks. Staff continues to wear masks. A family member questioned the issuance and status of the expired N95 masks that WSP had, as to if staff is wearing those? Staff stated that of the 1500 they had, 500 were given to staff at WSP, 20 were shipped to Work Release, 480 were sent to Coyote Ridge, and 500 were sent to Airway Heights. As of today, staff are wearing much like we see out in public.

- **What is the latest on hand sanitizers?**

There are no changes to the access to hand sanitizer throughout facility. It is in areas where there is no access to soap and water. The sanitizer stations are available at 3 Tower Gate and in the clean rooms. Staff continues to wait on direction and instructions from HQ – but none have been given. WSP received 60 gallons and we have discussed the misuse across the facilities. It was pulled and no further instructions have been received from DOC HQ.

- **Status of overall morale. Any planned fundraisers? How can we help?**

No fundraisers planned because the staff is "tired". If help from family members is needed, they will be informed.

- **What state of the Governor's 4 steps reopening plan pertains to resuming visitation?**

No one is sure where within the phases it will allow for prison visitations to be reinstated. Staff stated wherever it falls – we are sure to be behind in the curve. A family member commented on the news release of Walla Walla County and the “COVID PARTIES” and what concerns that raised? Staff stated the event was mischaracterized and there was a follow up article that corrected the information in the first article. It appears that there was a birthday party and someone was positive with virus and then it spread, it was an isolated incident.

- **It's our understanding that SPL is operating with a "skeleton" team. When are you planning to utilize full staff of incarcerated individuals?**

There are 50 workers in SPL at any given time as that is the guideline. A family member inquired to the fact - are the “off work” SPL men still receiving pay? Staff concurred yes; they are continuing to receive their pay at this time. A family member stated they felt that the direction is not going to come from DOC HQ, it seems as though it must be thought through at the facility level. Staff responded they are looking into ideas but again no action can take place until they hear from HQ. Adding that the green light has been given to the facilities to begin to come up with a visiting plan.

- **Now that incarcerated individuals and staff wear protective masks, does it make sense to continue limiting rec time? Other facilities are not limiting rec time to half the unit to our knowledge.**

A family member stated, since the protocols of masks and social distancing are being followed, and use masks in the yard has loosened, it seems that the reduction of “free” time could be given review, seems the units have become rigid on the tiered movements and that a gradual return to the allotted level “out of cell times” could be looked at. Medium custody is more like closed custody once again. Staff stated the movement changes were under HQ’s guidelines, the mandate is a limit of 50 inmates at a time, the tiered program allows for that. Staff is using common sense with the population in medium custody, total of 512 in diff units, there are small allowances to those numbers being tiered out. It was brought up that Joanna, from the Ombudsman office is visiting other facilities, could she inquire on what other facilities are doing, since other facilities are loosening the restrictions in movement and program? Staff stated that they are moving in direction of program opportunities and planning is being done by instructors with staff to have plans in place when the word comes that the guidelines/restrictions presently working under are lifted. As to what other facilities are doing, WSP leadership is waiting on direction from HQ

- **It is our understanding that CI is now making more than 1-2 types of mattresses for the incarcerated population. It is also our understanding that the decision on ordering a specific type of mattress is with the facility leadership. Could you explain the challenges with providing the incarcerated better than 1.5in thick mattress?**

Staff responded and stated that the 6” mattress is used for medical, and the population receives 4” mattresses. Joanna asked if she could respond, since her office has been working on this item as an issue that needs addressing for 2020, there has been a lot of information gathered. CI currently has two mattresses available a 4” and a 6” mattress. We know that the mattresses suppress to 1 ½ “after time, and not a long time in most cases. Currently she believes the 6” mattress is being used at Camps and the Female Facilities. CI is working on a prototype at Coyote Ridge. The high-density mattress is preferred for sleeping. Discussion was had about exploring options at the facility level, potentially the use of IIBF funds; staff stated they had tried that but no allowance by HQ. The reason the mattresses are not available for purchase by family members is that it could create other issues with personal property such as transferring, searches, damage, loss... Next steps are seeing the prototype mattress and the cost. Then of course you have budget issues, the budget crunch of funds currently, and then time allowance to have new mattresses staged in. However, action on this issue are frozen at this time due to the current issues being addressed with COVID-19. There has been substantial work on this item by the OCO and Joanna feels optimistic.

- **What are state plans to accelerate release of the incarcerated population due to COVID-19?**

Staff reported to date that 128 individuals have been released from WSP, 66 individuals were released in the 1st two weeks of the order, 62 released to Rapid Reentry, 13 were released last weekend and 2 more scheduled for May 12th. There will be more before the order ends potentially, however some of the Rapid Reentry released were quick to fail. Which creates an intake now that some of those released are returning as Community Custody Jurisdiction individuals. A family member inquired as to what is the % of housed incarcerated individuals to capacity? Maximum capacity is 2601, currently roughly 2400

housed. In the beginning WSP had bed space available, so the 200 beds were being used to assist other facilities with social distancing and other transfers. Originally 100 beds were set aside in the West for Isolation and Quarantine use 64 beds in the East for the CCJ transfers. Transfer “chains” are every other week, and the “Special” transfers have slowed down. The bed number fluctuates every day.

- **Is Swire Vending still in business for all we know?**

Yes, Swire is still maintaining all the vending machines in the staff areas at WSP. In addition, the visiting rooms machines were emptied of expired items. The machine in the visiting room that was problematic has been replaced. It was suggested that the coffee machine, which has always been an issue and is taking too much space/limited energy, also be looked at. Staff stated they would mention that to Sgt. Beal though it was mentioned many times in the past.

ROUNDTABLE

Discussion was raised on the JPAY Kiosk and Video visit failures. Specifically, Delta Unit - West, family has attempted 10 video visits with all being failures, and after 5 minutes the decision is made to disconnect and then call. It is the same kiosk that is being scheduled, we are told that the other kiosk next to D020, D021 works, how does one request a specific kiosk? Calls to JPAY have not been successful except for the credits. It was asked if the kiosks could be swapped out or any alternative solution found. Carrie, Steve Barker’s secretary was on call and stated there was a tech coming on the 12th, she could mention it - but they have no control over where the tech is dispatched to or what they are scheduled to work on. Due to the multiple kiosks, the bandwidth is the issue and it may be due to the double machines that there is unequal bandwidth flow. She continued to state that there had not been many other complaints about the poor quality. Since the shut down and changes to programs, WSP staff had asked JPAY to add additional video visitation slots for the facilities and various units to accommodate the need and lack of visitation. A family member stated that there is never a video visit that does not have some sort of fail, freezing, voice fail – timing issues, system kick outs, they are not being reported if there have been no other complaints. Williams unit video visits are never without issue or fail. *Who should the incarcerated report this to? For follow up?*

A family member brought up the EFV units access, and availability. One unit out of the four units is being used. Why is it two Medium Classified inmates cannot utilize two or more units at the same time? There are obvious custody restrictions, but proper planning and scheduling could allow for at least two units to be used. With the new changes in the EFV program, allowance and increased use is going to be an issue. At this time, the last EFV that was received by this member was Dec. There is no telling how far out visits will become with the next approvals and still utilizing just one unit. The use and regulating of this could be done if heads were put together and WSP wanted to make this happen. “When asked we are always told No – it is always no first”. There was no response nor explanation as to the additional unit use or possibility. Staff responded and stated that Sgt. Beal would be best to explain the reasoning behind the restrictions in this program. East complex is the processing center for EFV’s. It is staffed 4 days a week, there is no visiting Tuesday through Thursday. The program allows for processing, which is one hour before regular visiting, there is not enough time with the current staffing model to intake, process, inspect, transfer, and get the visitors out to the unit to add additional processing. If you give time to one end of the day, you lose time at the other end, these are shifts. So staffing adjustments would be necessary, this is true. Also, the visitors are taken out by a gas-powered vehicle and per DOC policy, the incarcerated cannot be in the area when a gas-powered vehicle is present. It was suggested that no one would mind waiting, the time it takes to go back and bring the other family out should not or would not cause hardship to families if the outcome was an allowance of additional program use, losing 15 minutes to 30 minutes is not huge compared to the outcome. Perhaps visiting should be 7 days a week for EFV – this would also allow for more families to participate and create more opportunities. It was also suggested that perhaps the use of a golf cart or electric cart with trailer be used it is an option. It was mentioned that in the three years of participating in this program, being taken out by 9:30 am which would allow enough time for others. The family members reiterated the hopes for opening up for solutions that can improve, create additional opportunities and add to the program for the current eligible families as well as any incoming program participants. Staff was requested to review the EFV process end to end and consider

the possibilities to expand this program. Staff stated they would talk to Sgt. Beal and invite him to participate in the next call. It was stated by staff that Steve Barker is not change averse and a review of programs and solutions are work in progress, doors are not closed to this subject and he commits to discuss further. Family members remain hopeful.

Congratulations were in order and given to Rob Jackson, who received the Employee Annual Award, Special Recognition by peers and co-workers at WSP for Equity & Inclusion. It was stated that a lot of people get nominated, not all receive the recognition.

An inquiry was made to what plans staff had for the CPPC position, since Melissa Hutcherson has moved to a Level 2 Classifications Counselor? Staff stated they are on a hiring freeze and the process is on hold until July. The position will remain vacant for 60 days.

It was stated that the next bi-weekly call would be Monday, the 25th, however that is Memorial Day and therefore it would be scheduled for Tuesday the 26th.

Thanks and appreciation were given by all and the call ended.